

From: Brett Odgers [bjodgers@iinet.net.au]
Sent: Friday, 18 August 2006 10:23 AM
To: Committees
Subject: Biosphere Reserve nomination for the ACT

Dr Hanna Jaireth

Secretary

Standing Committee on Planning and Environment

Dear Hanna

I'm responding to the Issues Paper of July 2006. The paper is a most valuable building block towards the nomination of an ACT Biosphere reserve, and hence towards sustainability for the ACT.

As you would have gleaned from my earlier submission, I see the nomination and accession to Biosphere Reserve status as a main chance to build a new political culture and community awareness for sustainability. There is a manifest imperative to change the increasingly anti-ecological, materialistic, consumerist and selfish social and economic cultures. There are the clear alternatives and prospects of working towards a more eco-sensitive society which at the same time enhances happiness, justice and opportunities for good and satisfying living standards.

In addressing the specific questions raised in the Issues Paper, my views are:

a.. I consider December 2008 timeframe is feasible given the preparatory work in hand and professional resources available. In addition it provides time for the ACT to show its mettle by the centenary year 2013.

b.. In addition to the above proposition regarding the shift to a more eco-sensitive society, the potential benefits lie in the ACT exploiting its comparative advantages in environmental sciences and management, tourism, National Capital functions and employment, thereby enhancing its national and international reputation.

c.. Negotiations with NSW about possible cross-border zonation or implications will be vital.

d.. The main point of the nomination, in my view, is obtaining broad community support.

e.. The ACT Place Names Committee should be involved. It is not just nomenclature but should mainly be about Aboriginal values and living in productive harmony with the natural environment.

f.. Liaison with City of Nara, Japan, could (like the Place Names Committee) add to the richness and ultimate success of the nomination and subsequent development.

g.. I am sure the nomination is viable, provided initiatives continue to be pursued to promote sustainable development (as in paragraph 3.58 of the Issues Paper).

h.. The need for an organization encompasses the preparation of the nomination, community involvement, promotion and ongoing management. However, it needs to be embedded in government, parliament, the executive and the bureaucracy. It cannot be separated or hived off. For the nomination process, professional, managerial and communications/public relations expertise is mainly required. Government must have ownership.

i.. The Paper's discussion of zonation and fulfillment of Reserve functions is most valuable and indicates, for me, the desirability and feasibility of declaring the whole of the ACT as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

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j.. Governments, stakeholders and the private sector could usefully be asked to support a national meeting of volunteers supporting Biosphere Reserves in Canberra before July or late-2007.

I would be pleased to discuss these points further.

Best wishes

Brett Odgers